

(b) whether telephone which has now become essential would be made available on demand by 2002 all over the country; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government in these directions?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is proposed to provide telephone on demand all over the country by the year 2002.

(c) Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology has been selected by BSNL for covering the rural and remote areas. This technology has been found to be cost effective and reliable with low operational cost and needs less maintenance efforts. For inaccessible areas which cannot be served with WLL technology or cables, satellite terminals will be utilized to provide the telecom services.

For providing telephones on demand, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. (MTNL) have made plans for expansions of telephone exchanges and setting up of new exchanges to meet the demand for new phone connections. Private operators have also been given licence to provide basic as well as cellular telephones. It is expected that both of them together will be able to achieve the objective of providing telephones on demand by the year 2002.

### **Faulty Telephones in Rural Areas**

†\*240. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the faulty telephones in rural areas are not being repaired for quite a long time as a result of which consumers in rural areas have to face a lot of difficulties.

(b) whether Government are going to take some concrete steps to ensure that the defective phones in such areas are repaired at the earliest; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) While every effort is made to repair expeditiously faulty telephones in rural areas, there are areas where due to reasons such as inadequate road infrastructure, law and order problems, erratic power supply, it has not been possible to ensure prompt restoration.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

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(b) and (c) Following measures are being taken to ensure prompt repair of such telephones.

- (i) Monitoring of fault repairs by Senior Officers.
- (ii) Rehabilitation/upgradation of external plant.
- (iii) Replacement of long spans of overhead alignment by under ground cables in phased manner.
- (iv) Daily testing of VPTs from telephone exchanges.
- (v) Formation of core groups in each SSA for prompt restoration of VPTs.
- (vi) Replacement of telephone instruments having completed expiry period in phased manner.
- (vii) Induction of modern technologies like Wireless in Local Loop, TDMA/PMP, Satellite in rural areas.
- (viii) Provision of generator sets to take care of long duration power break down.

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**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS**

**Development of Air Force station, Bihta in Bihar**

1675. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 174, given in the Rajya Sabha on 24th July, 2001, and state:

(a) whether the Committee constituted to enquire into Patna air crash has recommended the development of Air Force station, Bihta as an alternative to the existing airport; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Apart from certain short term measures the Committee constituted to enquire into Patna air crash has also, *inter-alia*, suggested to consider development of Bihta Air Force station for civilian air traffic, keeping in view the future growth of air traffic and restrictions at the present Patna Airport. Views of defence